The Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) announces the availability of pilot grant funding for AY 2016-2017.

The goals of the CCTS Pilot Grant Program are:

- To foster outstanding new clinical and translational research at UIC by supporting the development of preliminary data that can be used to launch new NIH or other externally-funded research proposals;
- To encourage interdisciplinary teams of investigators that span across Colleges and campus to develop collaborations or new research avenues;
- To promote interactions between basic and clinical scientists; and
- To support research collaborations with community partners and organizations.

This program focuses on clinical and translational research, and as such, all applications must involve human subjects, facilitate human subject investigations, establish infrastructure related to human subject investigation, or concern disease mechanisms with clear, near term implications for therapeutics or prevention. Pilot funding aims to support several aspects of the collaboration that will lead to a successful, extramurally funded research programs.

Aspects include but are not limited to:

- proof of principle studies for new methodologies;
- feasibility studies for patient recruitment;
- measurement validation studies;
- pilot intervention studies to inform sample size and power estimation;
- establishment of collaborative community partnerships;
- development of new technologies to address a clinical research problem;
- improvements in biomedical informatics architecture and/or delivery of services,
- new methods for structuring or analyzing data sets; and
- stimulating child clinical research.

Note: Pilot funds cannot be used for the performance of a clinical trial, itself.

Priority areas for funding for AY16-17 include, but are not limited to: child health research; community-engaged or based studies; studies of methods or process improvements in conducting clinical research; studies that address health equity.

Pilot grants can be up to 2 years in duration ($30,000 each year, with second year funding contingent upon progress made during year 01) and focus specifically on activities needed to prepare competitive NIH grant proposals.

Grant Application Process: This will be a two phase approach.
Phase 1.) Letter of intent with proposal abstract. The review committee will review and score these. A selected group will then be invited to submit for Phase 2.
Phase 2.) Full Application to be submitted only by those invited from Phase 1.

**Deadlines** for the AY 16-17 pilot grant program:
- Letters of intent (REQUIRED) due by 12 noon, Friday, September 30, 2016
- Complete pilot grant application due by noon Wednesday, November 30, 2016. Pilot grant applications will only be accepted from those invited to apply following a successful Letter of Intent submission.
- Award decisions: Friday, January 6, 2017

**Pilot Grant Guidelines**

**Eligibility**

a) **P.I. Eligibility:** Principal Investigators must be clinical, research, or tenure track UIC faculty or Senior Scientists at UIC. Although adjunct faculty cannot serve as PIs, they may serve as named investigators, collaborators, or key personnel. Post-doctoral fellows may also serve as key personnel, but cannot be PIs.

b) **Invitations to Apply for Pilot Grants:** Letters of intent are required and will be reviewed. Only applicants who have submitted a letter of intent and who are invited to apply for the full pilot or planning grant will be eligible.

**Award Duration and Amounts**
Pilot grants are up to 2 years in duration ($30,000 each year, with second year funding contingent upon progress made during year 01) and focus specifically on activities such as conducting preliminary research to inform study design, demonstrate feasibility of research protocols, pilot test novel methodologies, or initiate and establish new interdisciplinary research.

**Submission Process**

**Letters of Intent (2 pages maximum) are required** for consideration in Phase 1 from all applicants and must be submitted electronically at [www.go.uic.edu/CCTS_LOI](http://www.go.uic.edu/CCTS_LOI). Due no later than September 30th.

Letters of intent should include:

1. the names and affiliations of all investigators;
2. type of grant (planning or preliminary study);
3. a 200 word description of the research (written for a lay person to understand);
4. a statement of why this is a “pilot” grant application and how the pilot grant would facilitate a future external grant proposal;
5. A list of which CCTS core services may be needed to complete this project. Visit [www.ccts.uic.edu](http://www.ccts.uic.edu) for additional information on available research services.
6. A statement of how this proposed project may extend collaborations or develop new areas of research for the investigators.

[Click here for the LOI Form](http://www.go.uic.edu/CCTS_LOI) or visit [http://tinyurl.com/j42nefu](http://tinyurl.com/j42nefu).
IRB Approval: IRB approval is not required at the submission stage. If you receive a Pilot Grant award, pilot grant funds will be made available only after IRB approval (or exemption) has been granted.

Following an initial review of the letters of intent, applicants may be invited to submit full proposals. Please do NOT submit unless invited following Phase 1. Notification shall be by October 15th.

Application Content for complete application for Phase 2 (Due no later than November 30th).

A. Cover Page
B. Lay Language Summary (500 words) Present a concise statement of what you are going to do, how you are going to do it, and the significance to the topic RFA. Summaries will be included on website if funded.
C. Narrative Summary - up to 5 pages (exclusive of references) that may include the following, as appropriate:
   a) Abstract: This should present a concise statement of what you are going to do, how you are going to do it, and why, in language suitable for a multidisciplinary clinical review panel. This summary might:
      i) Identify what issues or questions will be explored and the possible long-term societal impact and benefits.
      ii) Describe how the proposed work could be supported at a later date by an external agency, if appropriate.
      iii) Provide a summary time-line for the scholarship by major aims, goals, or milestones.
      iv) Define any terms that are unique to the field
      v) Highlight critical administrative plans and agreements that will be prerequisites for interdisciplinary collaboration.
   b) Specific Aims: The questions or problems to be addressed. This might describe current efforts in this area and why the why pursuit of these questions will benefit from an interdisciplinary approach.
   c) Significance and Innovation
   d) Preliminary Data: Include only the preliminary data that are highly pertinent to the proposal.
   e) Experimental Design/Methods: Applicants may wish to outline the strategies proposed to accomplish the specific aims of the project and discuss the innovative aspects of the approach. Any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies should be described. A description of the resources and working arrangements required to implement each project should be described. A distinction must be made between those resources that already are in place (including staff) and those resources that must be added to advance the project.
   f) Plans for extramural funding: Detailed plan for submission of competitive applications to external funding agencies (priority will be given to applications planned for NIH funding). Program announcements and other pertinent NIH initiatives should be included. If known, applicants should specify the institute and program officer for the planned submission.
D. **Budget**: Each application requires an appropriate budget with full justification of personnel, materials, supplies, equipment, animal and patient care costs, costs associated with human subjects, and other expenses necessary for the proposed project period. An excel spreadsheet or table is acceptable.

   i) Highlight critical administrative plans and agreements that will be prerequisites
      Budget cannot include salary support for any investigator but should specify their
      time commitment.
   ii) Post Doc support and student stipends/fringes are eligible expenses.
   iii) Tuition remission is not an eligible expense. This will be covered by campus.
   iv) Indirect costs are prohibited
   v) Limited travel for purpose of professional meetings or essential collaboration may be
      approved

E. **NIH biosketches**: NIH biosketches including current and pending support for past five years
   for all key personnel noting areas of potential funding overlap with this proposal.

F. **Letters of support**: Include letters from the relevant Department/Unit head(s) affirming their
   agreement to the needed protected time, space, and other resources necessary for all study
   investigators to conduct the research.

G. **Appendices**: Should be limited to measurement instruments, surveys, and letters describing
   pledged resources.

* Budget, biosketches, letters of support, and appendices are not included in the page
  limits.

**Application Format**
* Single-spaced
* 11-point Arial font
* 0.5 in (1.27cm) all around

**Review process**
We invite applicants to submit the names of up to three potential reviewers (who are not in the same
division/department as the applicant). The review committee will score the proposals and forward their
recommendations to the CCTS Steering Committee. The CCTS Steering Committee will serve as the
council making final funding recommendations.

**Selection criteria**
Selection of proposals for funding will consider the following:

a) **Intrinsic Merit.** The overall quality, relevance and innovation of the work to the CCTS goals;
   the likelihood that the work will (a) lead to fundamental advances, to new clinical discoveries, or
   to new technological developments, and/or (b) improve the quality of life in Chicago and the
   broader community; (c) representation of pilot funding across the continuum of translational and
   clinical sciences; (d) the likelihood that the application will lead to successful funding in
   extramural competition will be factors in review.

b) **Appropriateness.** The need for and suitability of the initiative to the CCTS goals and
   mission; whether the proposed approach will add significantly to what could be accomplished
through existing methodologies. In addition, the integration of component projects is important and should be described explicitly.

c) PI Qualifications. The qualifications and credentials of the PIs, and their past productivity will be considered.

d) Institutional Commitment. The nature and level of resources available from the colleges/departments and from other sponsoring units will be considered.

e) Appropriateness of Management Plans and Arrangements. The adequacy of the organizational and administrative plans; the appropriateness of the budget; and the mechanism to evaluate project progress will be considered.

**Funding and Compliance Requirements**
Funded projects are required to submit brief semi-annual progress reports as well as a final report. Investigators must acknowledge CCTS funding in all publications and presentations. Investigators will also be invited to participate in further activities with the CCTS as appropriate (e.g., seminar presentations, training course lectures, and review of future applications). No pilot funds will be released without complete IRB approval or exemption from UIC's Internal Review Board.

**Questions**
Faculty with questions should contact Lauren Walsh at laurenw@uic.edu.